

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EEC

SUBJECT: EC AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS DISCUSS ANIMAL FEEDING OF
SKIM MILK POWDER

REF EC BRUSSELS 11207

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. EC AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS AT THEIR COUNCIL MEETING DEC 16 DISCUSSED THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL TO INCORPORATE MANDATORILY SKIM MILK POWDER INTO ANIMAL FEEDING RATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EC AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS DISCUSSED THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL REGULATION TO DISPOSE OF 600,000 METRIC TONS OF THE EC SKIM MILK POWDER SURPLUS THROUGH A MANDATORY 2 PERCENT RATE OF INCORPORATION INTO ANIMAL FEEDS. THE DUTCH RAISED THE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS FOR FEED COMPOUNDERS IN ADAPTING THEIR PROCESSING AS WELL AS THE COSTS INVOLVED IN SHIFTING TO HIGHER-PRICED SKIM MILK POWDER. THE UK AND ITALIAN DELEGATIONS POINTED TO THE FACT THAT THEIR COUNTRIES DID NOT HOLD LARGE STOCKS OF SKIM MILK POWDER AND MANDATORY INCORPORATION WOULD NECESSITATE THEIR IMPORTING POWDER FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES.

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IT WAS NOTED THAT THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL IGNORED PRODUCER

CORESPONSIBILITY FOR SURPLUS DISPOSAL AND SHIFTED THE BURDEN FROM DAIRY TO POULTRY MEAT AND PIGMEAT PRODUCERS. IN RESPONSE, EC COMMISSIONER LARDINOIS LET IT BE KNOWN THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO CONSIDER HIGHER SUPPORT MEASURES FOR POULTRY MEAT AND PIGMEAT.

3. ALL THE MINISTERS RECOGNIZED THAT THE EC HAD A SURPLUS PROBLEM AND HAD TO DISPOSE OF SKIM MILK. ANY DISPOSAL METHOD, HOWEVER, COULD NOT BE BOTH "CHEAP AND POLITICALLY PAINLESS" ACCORDING TO UK MINISTER PEART. THE PREVAILING OPINION IS THAT THE MINISTERS WILL ELECT FOR A CHEAPER SOLUTION, I.E., MANDATORY INCORPORATION AND NO INCREASED SUBSIDY. HOW TO ENFORCE THIS INCORPORATION SYSTEM IS A TECHNICAL MATTER, ACCORDING TO ONE MEMBER OF LARDINOIS' CABINET, AND SHOULD POSE NO MAJOR PROBLEM. WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE DUTCH, NO ONE SHOWED ANY CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECT MANDATORY INCORPORATION WOULD HAVE ON US SOYBEAN EXPORTS TO THE EC, NOR WHAT THE US POSITION WOULD BE. THE FRENCH HELD THAT THE EC SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT THE AMERICANS AND IF THE EC HAD TO TAKE SUCH MEASURES TO DISPOSE OF ITS SURPLUS, SO BE IT.

4. SEPARATE TELEGRAM WILL FOLLOW ON OTHER POINTS DISCUSSED BY AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS AT THEIR DEC 15-16 COUNCIL MEETING.
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